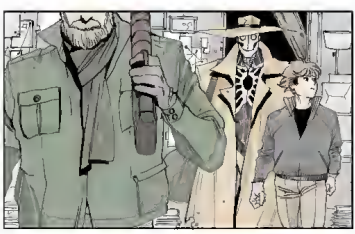
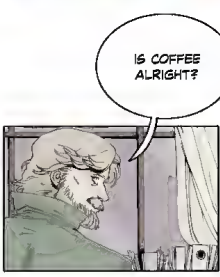
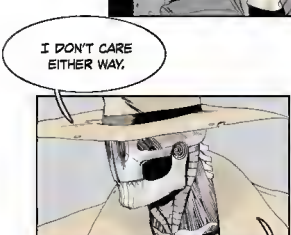
COME IN.




IS COFFEE ALRIGHT?

AH...YES.


I DON'T CARE EITHER WAY.

I SEE YOU MOVED YOUR OFFICE. I THOUGHT SOMEONE WAS ATTACKING US.

SIT WHEREVER YOU WANT~
WADE
WHERE...?
PLOP

WE'RE NOT HERE TO PLAY AROUND.

I HAVE TO MOVE WHENEVER I FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE.

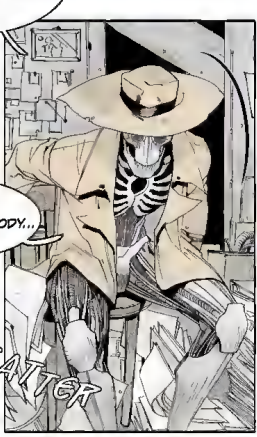
IT'S BEEN A WHILE~

I HEARD RUMORS, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D ACTUALLY BE KEEPING A KID WITH YOU.

SIT, SIT~

THERE'S NOWHERE TO SIT...

CADO SAID HE'D ALREADY CONTACTED YOU.



REGARDING PROTECTIVE CUSTODY...

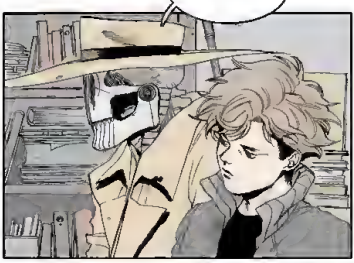
SCATTER

RIGHT. HE DID.

BUT DON'T YOU THINK I NEED TO KNOW WHAT I'M PROTECTING YOU FROM, FIRST?

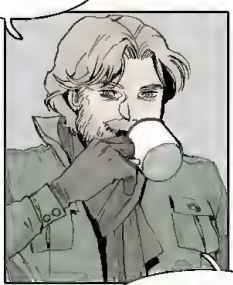
I DOUBT YOU WANT TO BE CUT OFF FROM THE WORLD...

I DO.



HAHAHA!

YOU'RE AS HUMORLESS AS EVER.



SO, THIS KID IS...

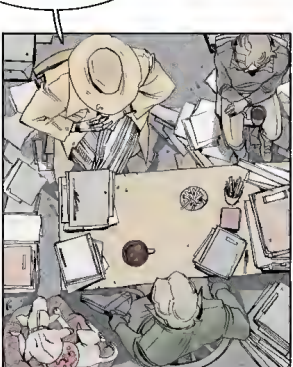
I'M YURA. AND I'M NOT A KID.

REALLY?

AND WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU WANT TO HIDE.

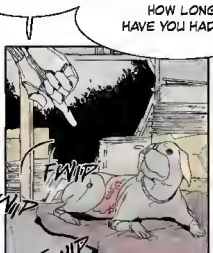
DON'T ASK SILLY QUESTIONS AND JUST DO YOUR JOB.

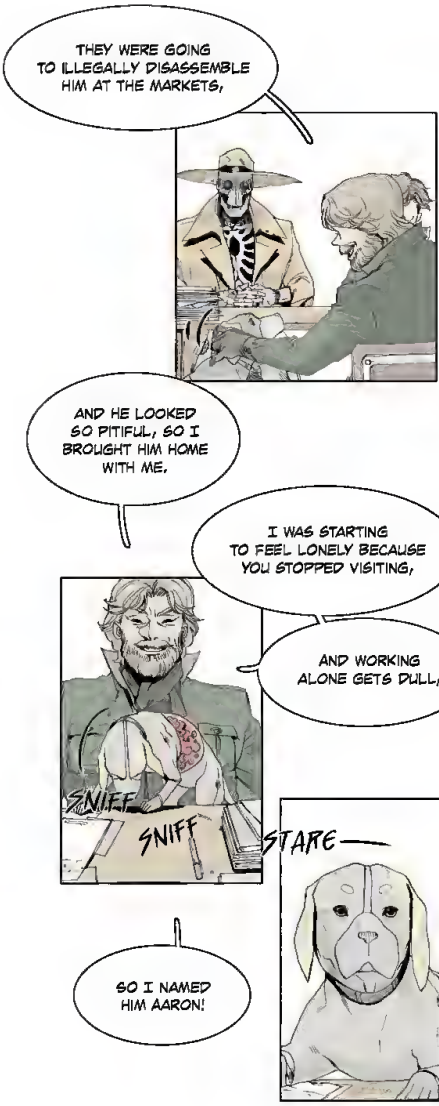


AND..

WHAT'S WITH THE DOG?

HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD IT?




THEY WERE GOING TO ILLEGALLY DISASSEMBLE HIM AT THE MARKETS,
AND HE LOOKED SO PITIFUL, SO I BROUGHT HIM HOME WITH ME.
I WAS STARTING TO FEEL LONELY BECAUSE YOU STOPPED VISITING,
AND WORKING ALONE GETS DULL,
SNIFF
SNIFF
STARE
SO I NAMED HIM AARON!

....
PFFFT
BASTARD.
COUGH

YOU'RE AS RUDE AS EVER~

DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO FIX THAT?

HEY KID, YOU SHOULDN'T STAY WITH HIM FOR TOO LONG.

BUBBLE

BUBBLE

HE'LL CORRUPT YOU~

C-CORRUPT...

HISS

SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR US?

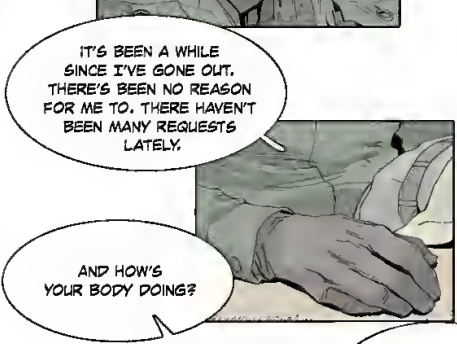
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON FIRST, HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN WITH YOU?

7-8 YEARS? I THINK?

YOU SHOULD'VE JUST LIVED OUTSIDE THE CITY. WHY DID STAY HERE, WHERE YOU'LL BE FOUND OUT?

YOU KNOW I'VE HAD THAT STORE FOR A WHILE.

AH, RIGHT~ THAT TRASH STORE.
AND DID YOU FORGET IT'S EVEN MORE DANGEROUS OUTSIDE?


IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE GONE OUT. THERE'S BEEN NO REASON FOR ME TO. THERE HAVEN'T BEEN MANY REQUESTS LATELY.
AND HOW'S YOUR BODY DOING?

WOAH~ ARE YOU WORRYING ABOUT ME? THAT'S NEW.

YOU USED TO MARVEL THAT I HADN'T DIED YET.
GLANCE

FLINCH

CURIOUS?

WHETHER I'M A HUMAN...

...OR A MACHINE?

I WAS A HUMAN. WELL, WE ALL WERE AT ONE POINT.

?

MY BODY STARTED HURTING ALL OVER ONE DAY.

AND MY BODY STOPPED FUNCTIONING PROPERLY.

I THINK THAT WAS WHEN I WAS AROUND...30?

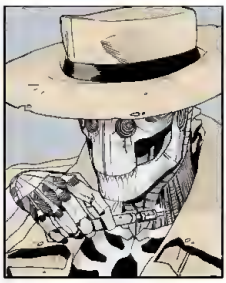
I WAS PRETTY YOUNG AND HEALTHY...

NO-ONE KNEW WHY IT WAS HAPPENING TO ME, AND SOON ENOUGH, I WAS ON THE VERGE OF DEATH.

I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THE PAIN ANYMORE.

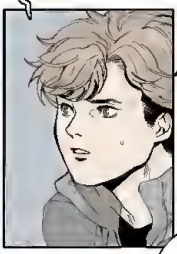
IT'S BEEN OVER 50 YEARS AFTER ALL...

YOU MUST BE OVER 80 NOW.



THEN HOW...

DO YOU...



HOW DO I LOOK SO YOUNG?

THAT'S...

...BECAUSE I WAS SEVERELY PUNISHED...

...FOR A CRIME I COMMITTED.

BACK THEN, THE HUMANS DIDN'T LIVE IN JUST THE PALACE.

WE LIVED IN HIDING, COVERING UP OUR TRUE IDENTITIES.

IT WAS PEACEFUL. MORE SO THAN NOW, AT LEAST.

BUT SOMEONE SOLD EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US OUT,

FOR HIS OWN BENEFIT...

...TO THE VERY PLACE YOU ESCAPED FROM.

MACHIA'S TOY PALACE.

TO BE CONTINUED..

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